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## INTRODUCTORY

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The traditions of a once prominent pioneer family appear to be doomed to oblivion. With the passing of every generation the blood of the proud Cherokee Indian becomes paler, and in time will fade into the forgotten past. It is to the pater and mater of the George W. Benge family that their descendants are indebted for this rich American heritage.

To my daughter Amabel (Benge) Hogan, my grandson Jack E. Hogan, Jr., Betty Jean Herndon, daughter of my deceased brother George F. Benge, and the sons and daughters of my deceased brother S. Alex Benge, for the benefit of their posterity, this written memorial is presented.

*Houston Benge, author*

*H.B.*

*Advised  
7/3/82  
J.E.*

THE GEORGE W. BENGE FAMILY - Tahlequah, (I.T.) Oklahoma

PARENTS

BORN

DECEASED

|                                 |                              |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| George W. Bengé - - - - -       | Nov. 8, 1853 - Jan. 24, 1919 |
| Fannie (Barnes) Bengé - - - - - | Nov. 29, 1857 - Nov. 3, 1933 |

DAUGHTERS

|                                    |                                           |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Jessie Bengé - - - - -             | June 4, 1878 - Feb. 12, 1963              |
| (Married Noel Casey- No issue)     |                                           |
| Minnie Bengé - - - - -             | Mar. 29 <sup>m</sup> 1881 - July 26, 1965 |
| (Never married)                    |                                           |
| Fannie Bengé - - - - -             | Feb. 15, 1883 - Nov. 23, 1895             |
| (Minor)                            |                                           |
| Eliza (Lyda) Bengé - - - - -       | Jan. 4, 1891 -                            |
| (Married Duane Billings- No issue) |                                           |
| Cora Bengé - - - - -               | Mar. 15, 1893 - Feb. 6, 1961              |
| (Married Blaine Cormany- no issue) |                                           |
| " Roy Gibbs- " "                   |                                           |
| " Walter Reeder- " "               |                                           |

SONS

|                                   |                                |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Samuel Alex Bengé - - - - -       | Sept. 23, 1879 - Oct. 10, 1947 |
| Married Maggie Payne (9 children) |                                |
| George F. Bengé - - - - -         | Nov. 25, 1885 - Nov. 2, 1932   |
| Married Emilie Adair- 1 child     |                                |
| (Betty Jean - to Cliff Herndon)   |                                |
| J. Albert Bengé - - - - -         | Apr. 4, 1887 - Aug. 17, 1909   |
| (Never married)                   |                                |
| Houston Bengé - - - - -           | Feb. 25, 1889 -                |
| Married Della Powell- 1 child     |                                |
| (Amabel - to Jack E. Hogan -      |                                |
| Parents of Jack E. Hogan, Jr. )   |                                |
| J. Sherman Bengé - - - - -        | Feb. 27, 1896 - June 2, 1897   |
| (Infant)                          |                                |

NOTE:

The parents, George W. Bengé and Fannie (Foreman) Barnes were born in Cherokee Nation, Indian Territory (now Oklahoma). They were married July 17, 1877 and resided in Tahlequah, I.T., thereafter. The parents, respectively, were Samuel Houston Bengé and Lucy(Blair) Bengé and Thomas Barnes and Mary (Foreman) Barnes.

All deceased members of the family are interred in Tahlequah cemetery, with exception of Samuel Alex Bengé who removed with his family to Enid, Oklahoma.

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The Benge family dates back to the early pioneer period of American history. Both sides of the family possessed Cherokee Indian blood in their veins, mixed with Scotch and English after the seventeenth century. Parents of both the maternal and paternal sides of the family were among the first settlers to occupy homesteads in Indian Territory after being driven by the U.S. Government from their homes in Georgia over what was afterwards referred to as the "Trail of Tears" because of hardships and suffering experienced in the long trek over mountains and streams during the winter months of 1838-39.

On the paternal side, George W. Benge was one of the more prominent citizens of the Cherokee Nation in Indian Territory. He made an enviable reputation as a lawyer-politician and was honored a number of times by the electorate as well as by appointments by the Principal Chief. He served as Prosecuting Attorney, Circuit Judge, U.S. Senator and Delegate to Washington. His father, Samuel Houston Benge, was also a prominent jurist and served his people with distinction in many capacities. His body, with those of his two wives, are buried in the officers circle in the National Cemetery near the town of Fort Gibson, Oklahoma.

On the maternal side of the ancestry, Fannie F. Benge descends from the Foreman and Barnes families, of military and educational reputation. Her uncle, Stephen Foreman, was a Presbyterian minister and assisted in establishing the first printing press in the Cherokee Nation. Her brother, J. Albert Barnes, graduated from Dartmouth and was an instructor in that college for several years when he was compelled to resign on account of the Civil War. Mother Benge attended Park Hill Female Seminary and taught in the public schools.

Both mother and father Benge devoted time to the civic and cultural life of their community; father held membership in local lodge orders, while mother belonged to the Eastern Star. They were charter members of the Presbyterian church and were active workers in its organization. They were charitable to a fault, taking into their home many young people and assisting them in obtaining an education who were unable to pay their own way. This was their contribution to a better way of life and they considered it their duty.

Both possessed a keen sense of humor and enjoyed living a full life, but were of hard working pioneer stock fully devoted to the lofty principal of doing good. They endured untold hardships in their early lives and many sacrifices were made for a fast growing family to which they were devoted. It was remarkable what they were able to accomplish with so little to work with. Credit must be given them for their sound practicable knowledge and unfaltering faith in a dedicated purpose - a good home well provisioned for the family located in a community that was destined to become a prominent business and educational center - Tahlequah, Oklahoma. Endowed by nature with untiring bodies and polished minds, either of them could have written a most interesting and educational book on their unusual experiences, but their talents were devoted to lives of usefulness seeking neither publicity nor credit for their labors. Their charitable deeds were multiple and varied, with no expectation for themselves except their belief in an eternal spiritual reward.

History of the George W. Benge family dates back to 1877 and consisted of the parents and ten children. At this time (1968) Lyda and Houston are the only survivors. Lyda is the widow of Duane Billings and lives alone in Tahlequah, occupying a residence on a corner lot of the old original homestead. Houston married Della Powell and for more than forty years they have made their home in Tulsa. They are the parents of Amabel, their only daughter. Amabel married Jack E. Hogan and, with their son Jack Hogan, Jr., are living in Tulsa. Jackie is completing his last year in Oklahoma State University.

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The passing of these most interesting characters marked the end of the pioneering period and the beginning of a generation confronted with a new way of life in a fast moving new world. The new era followed the adoption of Indian Territory into the great United States of America. It was this period in history that marked the complete transition of the Cherokee Indian from a state of savagery to a recognized state of civilization. He was therefore, after unknown eons, declared a citizen of his own country- the only home that he had ever known. They could now no longer be driven from pillar to post, always given the assurance that his new home was his TO HAVE AND TO HOLD "As long as grass grows and water flows". While the entire tribe was not ready for this new deal it had to be accepted since there evidently was no end to the westward movement, and government protection against intrusion was impossible.

It was, however, an unpardonable insult when they were referred to as "savages" when all they had ever fought for was the preservation of their lives and homes - an act accepted to be the first law of nature.

For those who are not familiar with the history of the Cherokees, it is interesting to know that they belonged to a group known as The Five Civilized Tribes. The other four were the Creeks, Chickesaws, Choctaws and Seminoles. They at no time had ever been confined to reservations as other tribes have been forced to endure as wards of the U.S. government. Instead, before their forced migration to the West, they possessed highly developed plantations in Georgia, lived in modern homes and had their own government fashioned after the forms of neighboring states and that of the federal government. Their school system was unexcelled and they made phenomenal strides towards the accomplishment of a complete civilized status. They, furthermore, possessed vast domains in the states of Virginia, West Virginia, North and South Carolina, Kentucky, Georgia and Alabama. Cessions of these lands were made by treaty stipulations to the Colonies and the United States (about 38 in number) dated from 1721 to 1835, and are recorded in the 5th annual Report PL VIII Smithsonian Institute- Bureau of Ethnology, exhibiting the boundaries, etc.

Tradition seems to reveal that considerable history of the Cherokee tribe was lost previous to 1700, and what information has been gathered cannot be authenticated, handed down by word of mouth from one generation to the next. By this means it is learned that the Cherokee nation was founded by seven brothers known as the "Long Hair" clan of the powerful Algonquin (or Iroquois) Indian nation of New York, and all traces of the date of their coming has faded from the memory of their descendants. The seven brothers were the law makers as well as the founders of the seven clans and their names have descended to the present generation through the mothers of those clans (accepted as rightful hereditary). For this reason it is impossible to record the history of Cherokee families, on account of the absence of family surnames. The clan names are the nearest approach they have to anything like the English surnames. Until 1700 the Cherokee people never had any other names than the inherited clan names of their mothers (except personal names which were often changed, but clan names never). The changing of the names of the men for instance, the sons of chief Caulunna from Ka-la-nah to Saw-we-noo-ky (Shawnee) and from Chic-sa-te-lu to Bushyhead, makes it almost impossible to trace any family beyond the memory of the living. The names of the founders of the Cherokee Nation are as follows: Long Hair- Blind Savannah - The Painter - The Deer - The Wolf - The Acorn - The Holly.

The seven brothers lived together in great love and harmony, devotedly attached to each other, until their children and grand children grew up to be men and women. Then new interests began to conflict in many ways that were unexpected and undesirable. The heart of each mother went out in love to her own children. The seven brothers, seeing the conflict between their wives and children, decided the wisest thing to be done by them was to separate. They then held a council and made laws for the government of their families. In compensation

for this decision, the first law that they made was to meet annually at their old home. Next they decided that the head of all the clans should be Long Hair (Ar-ni-ki-law-hi) who would preside at all these meetings, and settle all difficulties arising among the people. Each clan was to be governed by the eldest or best male member. All clan names must follow the clan name of the mother. The Cherokees had an old code of laws, fixed by the seven clans, and all the clans met once a year to be given a true understanding of these laws.

The Cherokee Nation later established a self governing two-party political system, after it had become a part of Indian Territory, and the custom of regular council meetings was continued until it became a state in 1907.

The unprecedented advancement that was being made by the Cherokees was so much faster than that of the white population Georgians complained to Washington and demanded their removal from the state. So much pressure was exerted that they were ultimately compelled to abandon their homes, of which they were very proud, and were driven by military force to the supposedly unknown wilderness west of the Mississippi. Hundreds of their number were unable to withstand the terrible ordeal and were buried in shallow graves enroute. Those who survived the indescribable experience of this historical migration undauntedly set in motion the machinery for continued progress. They used good judgment by settling in the eastern section of the new territory, surrounded by timbered hills, fresh mountain water streams and vast prairie lands for stock raising. This virgin soil, with an abundance of wild game, fish, furs, etc. provided them with the necessities of life. They selected a picturesque site for their government headquarters and gave it the name of TAHLEQUAH, destined later to become the capital of Cherokee Nation, Indian Territory. The two-story brick building, constructed to house the various offices and court rooms, still stands in the center of the city and has been dedicated an historical museum. After statehood the Cherokee National Female Seminary, a three-story brick structure, was taken over by the new state and is now used as the Administration building of Northeastern State College, a co-educational institution boasting an enrollment of more than 5,000 students. A reunion of former students of the C.W. Female Seminary and the Cherokee National Male Seminary, the latter located one mile south of town, continue to meet on the 7th day of May each year and many old acquaintances are renewed.

The governing body of the Cherokee Nation with its two political parties, known as the National and Downing organizations, functioned quite similar to that of the federal states. The leading executives, elected by popular vote, were Principal Chief and Assistant Chief, Clerk, Senator, Judges, Councilmen, etc. A meeting was held annually in the nation's capital, with representatives attending from the nine districts, namely: Tahlequah - Delaware - Sequoyah - Flint - Going Snake - Illinois - Saline - Canadian and Cooweescoowee. It was at this time that the Principal Chief delivered his annual message to the people. The assembled groups of councilmen, committees, etc. then got down to business campaigning and nominating candidates for the various offices. Politics on those days really heated and was taken seriously by everybody. Good schools were established and education for their youth was vehemently stressed. Their entire administration costs were financed out of their own tribal funds, without the necessity of taxation, thereby permitting them to enjoy a sound economy.

Again the Cherokees became victims of an undesirable element, trespassing and seeking free homesteads. Complaints and appeals to Washington for protection were made in vain. It was then that they decided there was no other recourse than to seek admittance to statehood. The Dawes Commission was appointed by the U.S. Government to allot the territorial land to the individuals whose names were on the citizens Roll. This was completed and the two territories of Oklahoma and Indian Territory were combined to form the 46th state of the Union, so proclaimed by President Theodore Roosevelt on the 16th day of November, 1907.

# Ancestor Chart

Name of Compiler \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Person No. 1 on this chart is the same person as No. \_\_\_\_\_ on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_.

(in Rev. War) Chart No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Obadiah Martin Bengé

b. 1763, Va. (Father of No. 8, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)

m. (2) pre 1800

d. 1846, Ala.

? Sarah Fields

b. (Mother of No. 8, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)

d.

18 John Lowrey

b. 1768 (Father of No. 9, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)

m. (2)

d. 1817

19 Ganne-lu-gi McLemore

b. (Mother of No. 9, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)

d. (m. 2nd John Bengé)

20

b. (Father of No. 10, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)

m.

d.

21

b. (Mother of No. 10, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)

d.

22 Jonathan Blyhhe

b. (Father of No. 11, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)

m.

d.

23 Quatie

b. (Mother of No. 11, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)

d.

24

b. (Father of No. 12, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)

m.

d.

25

b. (Mother of No. 12, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)

d.

26

b. (Father of No. 13, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)

m.

d.

27

b. (Mother of No. 13, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)

d.

28 John Foreman (Rev. War)

b. (Father of No. 14, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)

m.

d.

29 (Cherokee)

b. (Mother of No. 14, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)

d.

30

b. (Father of No. 15, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)

m.

d.

31

b. (Mother of No. 15, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)

d.

32

b. (Father of No. 15, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)

m.

d.

33

b. (Mother of No. 15, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)

d.

34

b. (Mother of No. 15, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)

d.

8 Martin Bengé

(Father of No. 4)

b.

p.b.

m.

d. 1871

p.d.

9 Eliza Lowry "Leshe"

(Mother of No. 4)

b.

p.b.

d. 1873

p.d.

10 George Blair

(Father of No. 5)

b.

p.b.

m.

d.

p.d.

11 Sarah

(Mother of No. 5)

b.

p.b.

d.

p.d.

12

(Father of No. 6)

b.

p.b.

m.

d.

p.d.

13

(Mother of No. 6)

b.

p.b.

d.

p.d.

14

(Father of No. 7)

b.

p.b.

m.

d.

p.d.

Elizabeth - "Katayah"

(Mother of No. 7)

b.

p.b.

m. 1st Drum Gould a

p.b.

d.

p.d.

white man

Hon. (Capt. in Union Army)

4 Samuel Houston Bengé

(Father of No. 2)

b. 28 Jan. 1832

p.b. Georgia

m. (1) 1851

d. 1902

p.d.

Judge

2 George Washington Bengé

(Father of No. 1)

b. 8 Nov. 1853

p.b. Sequoyah District

m. 17 July 1877

d. 24 Jan. 1919

p.d.

5 Lucy Blair

(Mother of No. 2)

b.

p.b.

d. April 1866

p.d.

1 Houston Bengé

b. 25 Feb. 1889

p.b.

m.

d.

p.d.

6 Thomas Barnes of Tenn.

(Father of No. 3)

b. 1811 ?

p.b.

m.

d. 4 Feb. 1859 ?

p.d.

3 Fannie Barnes

(Mother of No. 1)

b. 29 Nov. 1857

p.b. Dwight Mission, Sequoyah Dist.

d. Nov. 1933

p.d.

7 Mary Foreman

(Mother of No. 3)

b.

p.b.

d.

p.d.

(Spouse of No. 1)

b.

p.b.

d.

p.d.

desc of  
Wm. Bengé  
to Va. 1619

# Ancestor Chart

Name of Compiler \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Person No. 1 on this chart is the same person as No. 18 on chart No. 1.

Chart No. 2

b. Date of Birth  
p.b. Place of Birth  
m. Date of Marriage  
d. Date of Death  
p.d. Place of Death

4  
b. (Father of No. 2)  
p.b.  
m.  
d.  
p.d.

2 George Lowrey  
(Father of No. 1)

b.  
p.b.  
m.  
d.  
p.d.

5 (Mother of No. 2)  
b.  
p.b.  
d.  
p.d.

1 John Lowry "Te-car-law-he"  
capt in war of 1812

b. 1768  
p.b.  
m. (2)  
d. 1817  
p.d.

6 Ghi-go-ne-11  
(Father of No. 3)  
b.  
p.b.  
m.  
d.  
p.d.

3 Nannie  
(Mother of No. 1)

b.  
p.b.  
d.  
p.d.

7 (Mother of No. 3)  
b.  
p.b.  
d.  
p.d.

(Spouse of No. 1)

8 (Father of No. 4)  
b.  
p.b.  
m.  
d.  
p.d.

9 (Mother of No. 4)  
b.  
p.b.  
d.  
p.d.

10 (Father of No. 5)  
b.  
p.b.  
m.  
d.  
p.d.

11 (Mother of No. 5)  
b.  
p.b.  
d.  
p.d.

12 Oo-loo-tsa (of Holly Clan)  
(Father of No. 6)

b.  
p.b.  
m.  
d.  
p.d.

13 Oo-lotsa (Holly Clan)  
(Mother of No. 6)

b.  
p.b.  
d.  
p.d.

14 (Father of No. 7)  
b.  
p.b.  
m.  
d.  
p.d.

15 (Mother of No. 7)  
b.  
p.b.  
d.  
p.d.

16 b. (Father of No. 8, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)  
m.  
d.

17 b. (Mother of No. 8, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)  
d.

18 b. (Father of No. 9, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)  
m.  
d.

19 b. (Mother of No. 9, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)  
d.

20 b. (Father of No. 10, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)  
m.  
d.

21 b. (Mother of No. 10, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)  
d.

22 b. (Father of No. 11, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)  
m.  
d.

23 b. (Mother of No. 11, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)  
d.

24 b. (Father of No. 12, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)  
m.  
d.

25 b. (Mother of No. 12, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)  
d.

26 b. (Father of No. 13, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)  
m.  
d.

27 b. (Mother of No. 13, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)  
d.

28 b. (Father of No. 14, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)  
m.  
d.

29 b. (Mother of No. 14, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)  
d.

30 b. (Father of No. 15, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)  
m.  
d.

31 b. (Mother of No. 15, Cont. on chart No. \_\_\_\_\_)  
d.